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SOME RESULTS OF CLOTHING INTERVIEWS WITH HOMEMAKERS

In preparation for this conference the home demonstration agents interviewed homemakers in their homes to get some further ideas of the homemakers' interests and needs and present practices in the field of clothing.

The home demonstration agents wanted to find out:

1. The extent to which the homemakers are making or buying their own clothing and clothing for their children.
2. Some of the jobs connected with clothing which the homemakers like or dislike to do.
3. Some of the difficulties the homemakers have in buying clothing, in sewing, and in caring for clothing.
4. Some of the ways the homemakers have solved these problems.
5. Some clothing problems with which the homemakers want help in buying, in sewing, and in caring for clothing.
6. Some of the improvements the homemakers have noticed in the last few years that have helped them in clothing.
7. Information the homemakers would like to have on labels for yard goods and ready-mades.
8. The homemakers' main sources of information on clothing.

Fifty-five home demonstration agents visited an average of 5 homemakers in each county or 287 homemakers in the State.

The visits were made to a cross section of homemakers representing the following different age groups-- those under 30 years of age, 31 to 45, and over 45 years of age; those with children of preschool, grade school, and high school age; farm, rural nonfarm and urban homemakers.

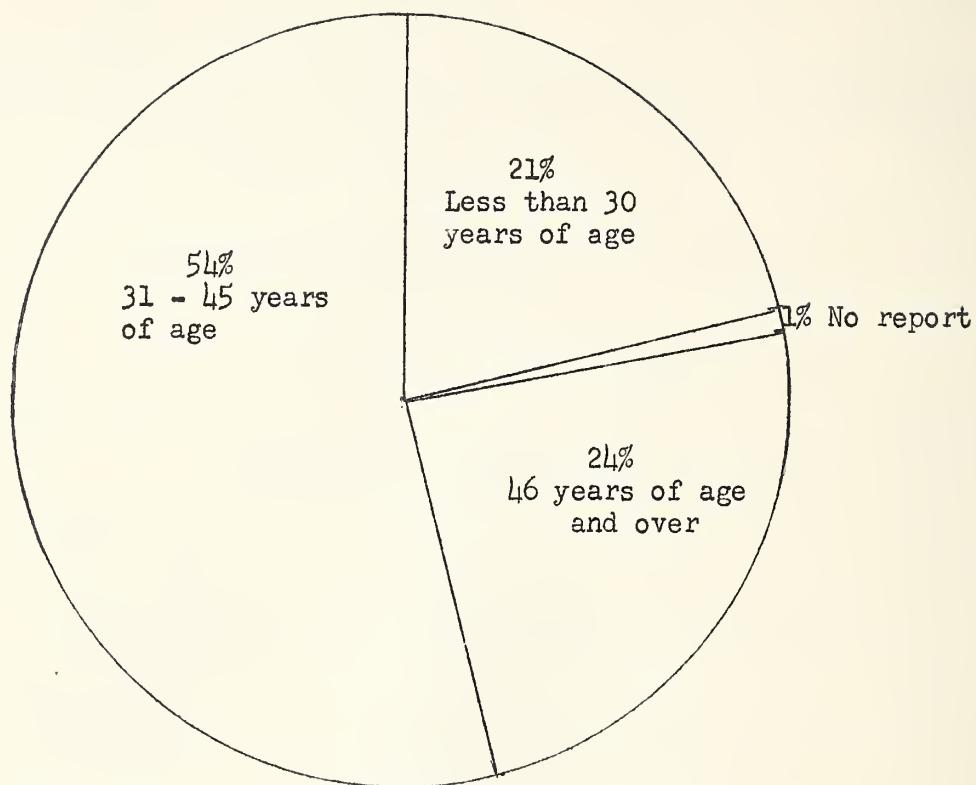
What were the ages of the homemakers?

21% are less than 30 years of age;

54% are 31-45 years of age;

24% are 46 years of age and over.

1% did not answer this age question.

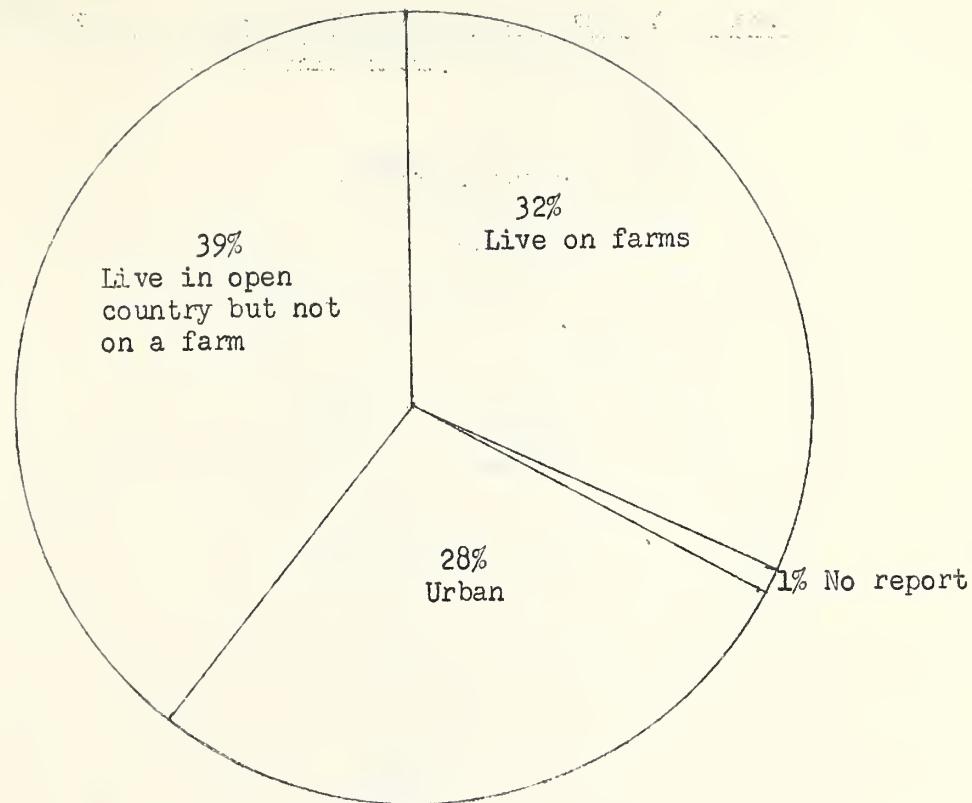


Children of homemakers who were visited

9% of the homemakers had no children;
33% have preschool children;
46% have grade school children;
37% have high school children;
14% have children past high school age and at home.

Where did the homemakers live who were interviewed?

32% lived on farms;
39% lived in the open country, but not on a farm or in a small town or village of less than 2,500 population;
28% lived in a town or city with 2,500 or more;
1% no report.



To what extent do the homemakers work for pay away from home?

29% of the homemakers work for pay away from home;

18% of these, full time;

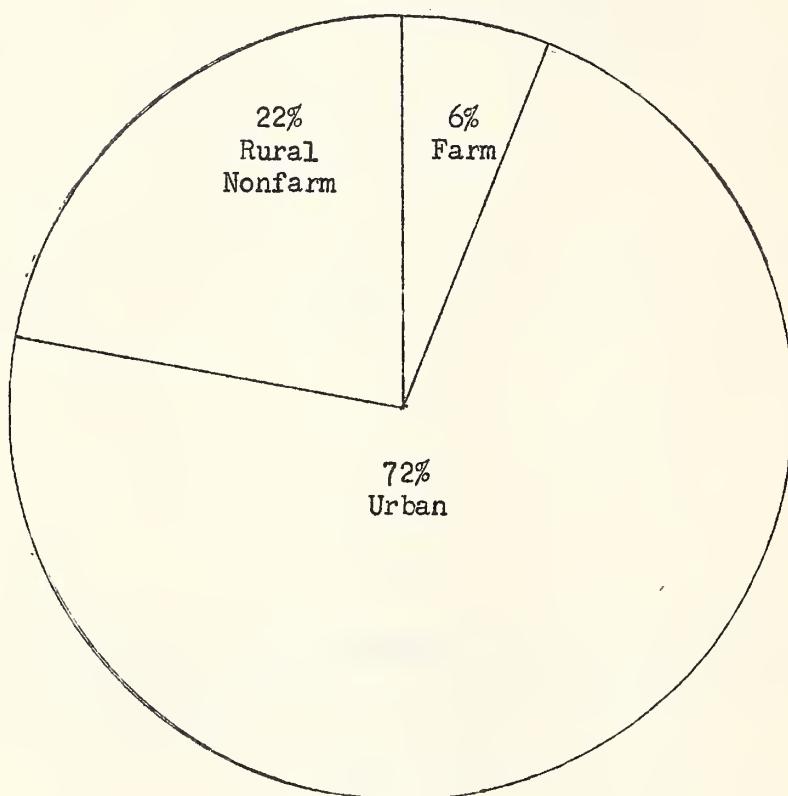
11% part time.

What is the distribution of families in Pennsylvania -
all occupied dwelling units?

6% are farm.

22% are rural nonfarm.

72% are urban

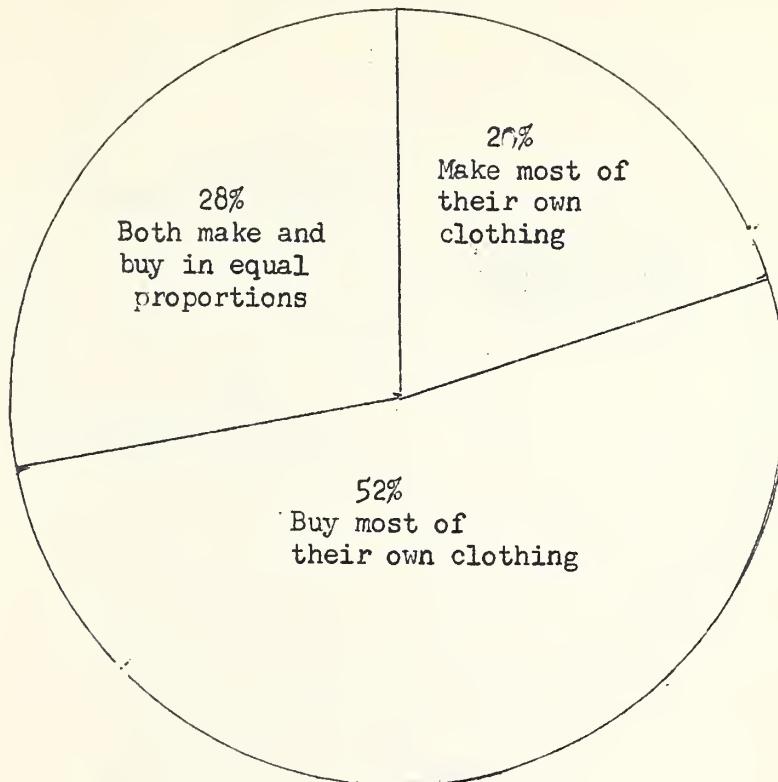


The Extent to Which Homemakers Make or Buy Their Own Clothing

Twenty percent of the homemakers make most of their own clothing. Twenty-eight percent both make and buy in equal proportions. Fifty-two percent buy most of their own clothing.

This means that 48 percent or nearly one-half of the homemakers sew for themselves, and can be assisted through home sewing.

Over one-half of the homemakers buy most of their clothing. We need to consider the kinds of questions these homemakers have, what help they want, and the methods through which Extension can give help.

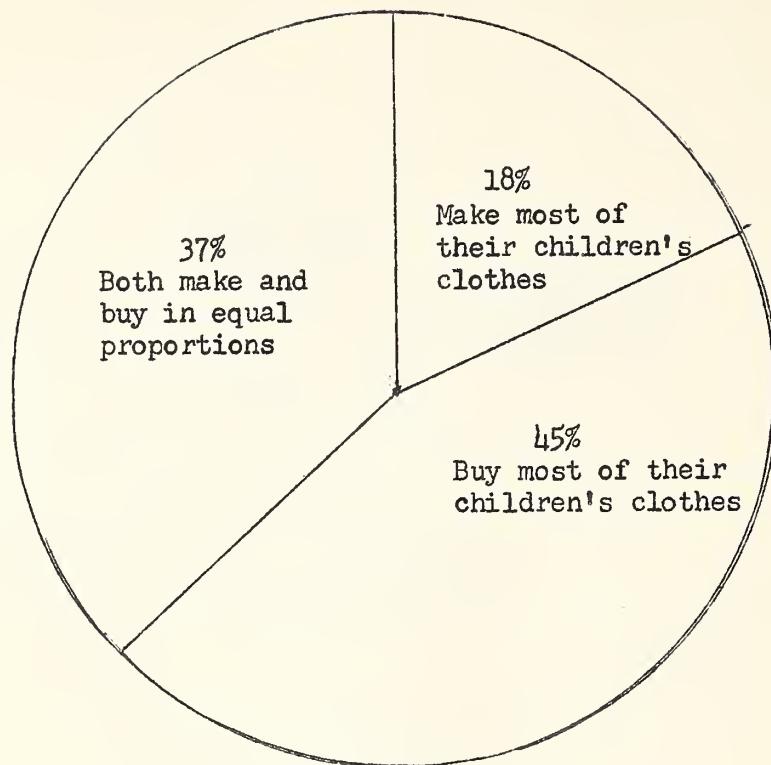


The Extent to Which Homemakers Make or Buy Their Children's Clothing

Eighteen percent of the homemakers make most of their children's clothing; 37 percent both make and buy in equal proportions, and 45 percent buy most of their children's clothing.

Fifty-five percent of the homemakers therefore sew for their children; these homemakers can be reached through home sewing.

Forty-five percent of the homemakers buy most of their children's clothing. We need to consider the types of questions they want answered and the different methods to reach them.



Some of the Jobs Connected With Clothing Which the Homemakers Dislike To Do

These jobs are given in descending order:

- 53% dislike mending;
- 45% dislike ironing clothes;
- 19% dislike buying clothes for themselves;
- 18% dislike sewing for themselves;
- 9% dislike washing clothes;
- 7% dislike to sew for children;
- 6% dislike buying clothes for family members.

Over one-half of the homemakers dislike mending. Their principal reasons are the time it takes and the mending not being worth the effort. Other reasons were the difficulty in doing a neat job and disguising the mend, complication of the job, lack of creativeness, the job being too tedious and monotonous.

Some of the Difficulties the Homemakers Have in Buying Clothing (continued)

- 2% - unable to find well-made clothes.
- 2% - need large selection in moderate priced clothes.
- 2% - lack of knowledge about materials.
- 1% - materials not colorfast as advertised.

Some Of The Difficulties The Homemakers Have in Sewing

Sixty-four percent of the homemakers reported difficulties in sewing. These are listed in descending order:

- 42% - Fitting.
- 21% - proper fit.
- 17% - pattern adjustment.
- 4% - lack of uniformity in size of patterns.
- 36% - Sewing techniques.
 - Finishing.
 - Collars, inner facings, etc.
 - Putting in sleeves.
 - Zippers.
 - Inset pockets.
 - Felled seams and gussets.
 - Using attachments, operation of sewing machine.
 - Working buttonholes.
 - Covering buckles.
 - Some materials are hard to work with.
 - Patterns should be marked better.
 - Matching plaids.
 - Lack of knowledge of new methods in tailoring.
- 11% - lack of time or patience.
- 7% - getting right appearance on finished product.
- 4% - limited selection of color and prints.
- 3% - Fabrics not wrinkle-resistant as advertised.

Nearly one-half of the homemakers reported disliking ironing clothes. Again the reasons centered chiefly around the time it takes. Other reasons were the monotony and tediousness of the job, the dislike of standing, and old equipment.

Only 9 percent of the homemakers dislike washing clothes. Their reasons were the disagreeableness of the job, tiresomeness of the job and old equipment.

About one-fifth of the homemakers dislike buying clothes for themselves, chiefly because of being hard to fit, difficulty in finding appropriate clothes, difficulty in knowing what to select and the time it takes to buy.

Also about one-fifth of the homemakers dislike sewing for themselves, chiefly because of being hard to fit and the time it takes. Other reasons were lack of standard patterns and difficulty in adjusting patterns.

A lower percentage of the homemakers disliked buying clothes for family members or sewing for children.

Six percent of the homemakers dislike buying clothes for family members, their reasons being -- hard to fit, hard to please, possibility in getting wrong sizes, the limitation of time, and family members would rather buy their own clothes.

Seven percent of the homemakers dislike to sew for children, their reasons being -- the time it takes, inexperience in sewing, pattern difficulty, and preference for bought clothes.

Summary of Jobs Disliked

The two jobs the homemakers dislike most are mending and ironing. The time these jobs take is of first importance. The next two jobs the homemakers dislike are buying clothes for themselves and sewing for themselves. Fitting problems are of first importance. Time is high in importance also.

Some of the Difficulties the Homemakers Have in Buying Clothing

Seventy-nine percent of the homemakers reported some difficulties in buying clothing. These are listed in descending order:

40% - selection of a suitable style for themselves.

22% - difficulty in fitting ready-made garments.

15% - financial difficulties

7% - poor quality materials on the market.

7% - sizes not uniform or standard. For example: Half size in one brand not the same in other brands.

6% - not labeled properly.

Some Difficulties the Homemakers Have in Caring For Clothing

Fifty percent of the homemakers reported difficulties in caring for clothing. These are listed in descending order:

41% - Laundering.

Have difficulty with buttons and buckles rusting after laundering.
Getting suitable washable materials.
Threads not colorfast.
Ironing and pressing.

9% - Mending.

How to mend properly.
Nylon materials hard to mend.
How to keep from fraying.

8% - Storage space.

Lack of adequate storage space.
How to store seasonal apparel.

4% - Lack of time.

3% - Lack of knowledge of materials.

3% - Better and clearer instructions on labels.

Summary of Difficulties

The four main difficulties seem to be: (1) Fitting, (2) selection of suitable styles for themselves, (3) laundering and (4) sewing techniques.

Some Ways The Homemakers Are Solving These Difficulties

Sixty-seven percent of the homemakers reported some ways they are solving their difficulties. These are listed in descending order:

44% - Through better shopping practices.

Reading labels.
Knowing reliable brands.
Patronizing certain shops.
Buying better made clothes.
Finding brands that come in half sizes.
Buying nylon socks and T-shirts.
Shopping around and ordering.
Asking sales clerks.
Not buying synthetics.
Buying easy-to-care-for things.
Not buying suits any more because they are hard to fit.
Trying on clothes before buying.
Buying better quality of material.

35% - Through sewing.

Sewing for self.
Attending extension sewing classes.
Learning how to fit through experience.
Buying printed patterns.
Buying new sewing machine.
Having clothes made.
Taking more time with sewing.
Pattern adjustment.
Having garments altered.

22% - Through care of clothing.

Does home dry cleaning.
Sends to professional dry cleaner.
Uses own judgment in ironing certain materials.
Using new appliances - steam iron, etc.
Mending with press-on tape.
Using moth crystals.
Washing nylons and good things by hand.
Changing type of starch.
Bleaching nylons.
Do not bleach rayons.
Hanging large bags from pipes in cellar.
Wrapping article before storage.
Storing in plastic bags.

6% - Through using helpful information.

Up-to-date information from extension offices.
Gets help from friends and relatives.
Reads articles in magazines and newspapers.

2% - Time management.

Schedules work.
Plans time for sewing and buying.

5% - Reported they had not solved their difficulties.

Problems With Which Homemakers Want Help

In caring for clothing.

Forty-eight percent of the homemakers have problems with which they want help in the care of clothing.

41% - More information on labels, such as:

General instructions on how to care for garment.
Cleaning, washing and general care.
Should garment be dry cleaned or washed.
Ironing or pressing instructions.

8% - More knowledge needed in care of new materials. (Nylon)

How to care for elastic in boys' waistband of trousers.

8% - Storage problems.

Seasonal apparel.

Moth-proofing.

6% - Stain or spot removal.

5% - Mending.

How to mend and darn neatly.

In buying:

47% have problems on buying clothing with which they want help.
These are given in descending order:

19% - would like to know how to select suitable styles.

18% - would like help in selecting new fabrics.

8% - more and clearer information on the labels.

4% - how to get better cooperation from clerks and salespeople.

3% - need help in fitting garments.

3% - how to select good quality materials.

3% - need help in selection of suitable accessories.

3% - better and larger variety to select from.

3% - need help in finding more moderately priced garments in half sizes.

3% - lack time to shop and need someone to help them make selections.

In sewing:

46% - listed problems with which they want help.

43% - sewing techniques.

Insert pockets.

Buttonholes.

Putting in zippers.

Short cuts in sewing.

Detail in sleeves, necks and tailoring.

Matching plaids.

How to sew new materials (rayon, nylon).

How to cover buttons and buckles.

Adjustments of machine and use of attachments.

More practical knowledge needed.

20% - Fitting.

Proper fit.

Standard pattern.

Pattern adjustment, better instruction.

Finding right pattern.

3% - Remodeling.

3% - New ideas for styles and patterns.

2% - Would like to learn to sew.

Summary of Problems With Which Homemakers Want Help

79% - reported difficulties in buying.

64% - " " " sewing.

50% - " " " care.

But when they were asked problems with which homemakers wanted help -

48% - reported wanting help on care.

47% - " " " " buying.

46% - " " " " sewing.

Does this raise the question whether or not homemakers listed problems on which they wanted help or only problems on which they think they could get help?

Improvements Homemakers Have Noticed

Improvements

55% - new fabrics and finishes.

Finding new fabrics, new finishes on the market.

53% - Care - easy to care for garments, more washable.

Improvement in detergents and washing compounds.

New and modern appliances - steam irons, etc.

31% - Home sewing.

New methods.

Simple patterns.

Notions, such as buckles, belts, and buttons.

22% - Labels - magazine articles.

21% - Plentiful market.

Better styles.

Uniformity of sizing.

Larger selection and variety.

Information the Homemakers Would Like to Have
On Labels for Yard Goods and Ready-mades

For yard goods - 73% of the homemakers had ideas which are given in descending order:

- 40% - whether sanforized or shrinkage given.
- 35% - wash, dry clean, or ironing instructions.
- 34% - fiber content and fabric.
- 30% - colorfast or not.
- 7% - type of finish.
- 3% - wear ~~and~~ ^{ability}
- 3% - crease and wrinkle resistant.
- 8% - other (thread count, width).
- 27% - no answer given.

For ready-mades - 84% of the homemakers had ideas which are given in descending order:

- 55% - instructions for cleaning, washing or ironing.
- 34% - sanforized or shrinkage.
- 26% - fiber or fabric content.
- 25% - colorfast.
- 6% - type of finish.
- 5% - crease and wrinkle resistant.
- 4% - care of buttons and belts.
- 8% - other.
- 16% - no reason given
- 9% - standard sizes (true size).

Reasons the women want this information - 75% of the homemakers list reasons which are given in descending order:

- 21% - better care in laundering or cleaning.
- 19% - more economical buying.
- 16% - better care for garments.
- 15% - do better job of sewing, fitting and buying.
- 10% - determines quality of garments.
- 9% - time and money saved.
- 8% - garment will last longer.
- 7% - getting to know of good brands.
- 4% - other.
- 25% - no reason given.

The Homemakers Were Asked if They Thought It Should Be Required by Law to Say What Fibers Are Used in Fabrics

- 91% - said yes.
- 5% - did not answer.
- 4% - said no.

Of the 91% who said yes-

72% said, yes, it should be required by law to say what fibers are used in all fabrics.

10% said, yes, it should be required by law to say what fibers are used in some fabrics.

Main sources of information on clothing.

97% of the homemakers listed their main sources of information which are given in descending order:

- 69% - Magazines or newspapers.
- 27% - Extension.
- 25% - Television or radio.
- 19% - Mail order catalogs.
- 15% - Labels.
- 7% - Neighbors.
- 5% - Pattern books
- 4% - Pamphlets or circulars.
- 3% - Salespeople.
- 3% - Window shopping.
- 3% - Experience.
- 3% - No answer..

